

Message Text

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ORIGIN COME-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 OES-07 L-03 CEQ-01 CG-00

DOT-00 SMI-01 INT-05 DODE-00 H-02 SS-15 NSC-05

/054 R

DRAFTED BY COMM/NOAA/NMFS:RARNAUDO:YJ

APPROVED BY OES/ENP/EN:DRKING

COMM/NOAA/NMFS:HBEASLEY

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ARA/MEX:EBITTNERARA/RPP:MR. FINAN

OES/OFA/OCA:JBROWN

OES/OFA/FA:BHALLMAN

L/OES:MLHOINKES

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R 040141Z SEP 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

UNCLAS STATE 212222

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV,MX

SUBJECT:US-MEXICO DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING MARINE MAMMALS

1. THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO HAVE COOPERATED IN THE AREA OF MARINE MAMMALS IN A NUMBER OF FORA, AND GENERAL AGREEMENT EXISTS ON THE GOALS OF CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF MARINE MAMMALS. COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES INCLUDES: A) US-MEXICO MARINE MAMMAL SCIENTIFIC DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN HELD ANNUALLY SINCE JANUARY 1976 TO DISCUSS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH COOPERATION, B) U.S.-MEXICO FISHERIES AGREEMENT, SIGNED IN 1976, WHICH INCLUDES PROVI-
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SIONS PLEDGING COOPERATION TO REDUCE INCIDENTAL TAKE OF MARINE MAMMALS AND TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES, AND C) COOPERATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC) WHERE BOTH NATIONS HAVE DEVELOPED AND COORDINATED THEIR RESPECTIVE EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF STRONG POSITIONS ADVOCATING STRICTER WHALE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION MEASURES.

2. IN 1976, THE IWC UNANIMOUSLY PASSED A RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE GOM AND USG TO ESTABLISH REGULATIONS TO REDUCE THE HARASSMENT (E.G., FROM INCREASING TOURISM AND SPORT BOATING) OF GRAY WHALES IN BREEDING AREAS. AT THE 1977 ANNUAL MEETING, THE IWC AGAIN RECOMMENDED THAT THE U.S. AND MEXICO REDUCE HARASSMENT IN BREEDING AREAS, AND ALSO

NOTED WITH CONCERN THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF HABITAT REDUCTION BY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ON CONTINENTAL SHELVES AND BREEDING GROUNDS. THE IWC HAS REQUESTED BOTH COUNTRIES TO REPORT ON THEIR PROGRESS IN THIS REGARD.

3. ADDITIONALLY, THE UNITED STATES HAS RECOGNIZED DOMESTICALLY THE NEED TO COOPERATE WITH REGARD TO MARINE MAMMALS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS: A) THE WHALE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION STUDY ACT OF 1976 CALLS ON "THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE THROUGH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, TO INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH MEXICO AND CANADA FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF WHALES; B) IN DECEMBER 1976, AN AD HOC INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON AN INTERNATIONAL MARINE MAMMAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDED INITIATION OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH MEXICO IN THE FIELD OF CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WHALES AND OTHER MARINE MAMMALS; C) THE MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT U.S. - MEXICO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS BE UNDERTAKEN TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT MARINE

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MAMMALS.

4. WE THUS BELIEVE IT IS DESIRABLE THAT STEPS BE INITIATED TO FURTHER U.S. - MEXICAN COOPERATION IN THESE AREAS. DEPARTMENT REQUESTS EMBASSY APPROACH APPROPRIATE MEXICAN

OFFICIALS AND SUGGEST BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS BE PLANNED. THE US - MEXICO FISHERIES AGREEMENT PROVISION NOTED IN PARA 1 COULD PROVIDE THE BASIS ON WHICH TO DEVELOP A SPECIFIC COOPERATIVE PROGRAM.

5. THE AREA OF PRIMARY CONCERN AT THIS STAGE IS THAT OF GRAY WHALES. THE USG THEREFORE SEEKS TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING: 1) JOINT OR COORDINATED REGULATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT METHODS, WITH REGARD TO THE HARASSMENT OF GRAY WHALES; 2) MEASURES FOR HABITAT PROTECTION; AND 3) COOPERATIVE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. WHILE GRAY WHALES ARE OF BASIC IMPORTANCE, DISCUSSION AND INCLUSION OF OTHER WHALES, SUCH AS HUMPBACK, FIN AND SPERM, WOULD BE WELCOMED.

6. DISCUSSION OF OTHER MARINE MAMMAL SPECIES SHOULD ALSO

BE INCORPORATED IN TALKS. SPECIES OF PARTICULAR INTEREST ARE GULF OF CALIFORNIA HARBOR PORPOISE, MANATEE, GUADALUPE FUR SEAL, NORTHERN ELEPHANT SEAL, HARBOR SEAL, BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN, KILLER WHALE, SEA OTTER, CALIFORNIA SEA LION, AND PORPOISE TAKEN IN TUNA FISHERIES. WITH RESPECT THESE SPECIES, THE USG WOULD PROPOSE TO DISCUSS 1) COORDINATED OR JOINT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, 2) HABITAT PROTECTION, 3) MARINE MAMMAL SALVAGE PROGRAM TO RECOVER AND ANALYZE BEACHED ANIMALS, AND 4) EXCHANGE OF SCIENTISTS.

7. IF GOM OFFICIALS ARE RESPONSIVE TO IDEA OF DISCUSSIONS ON ABOVE SUBJECTS, EMBASSY MAY SUGGEST INFORMAL PLANNING AND EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS WHICH COULD TAKE PLACE IN U.S. OR MEXICO. USG IS PREPARED TO SEND TEAM OF U.S. UNCLASSIFIED

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OFFICIALS CLOSELY FAMILIAR WITH MARINE MAMMAL PROBLEMS TO MEXICO FOR THIS PURPOSE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WHALES, SPECIES PROTECTION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE212222
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RARNAUDO:YJ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770321-0377
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770997/aaaadeht.tel
Line Count: 138
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cf33fb4d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN COME
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1386813
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-MEXICO DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING MARINE MAMMALS
TAGS: SENV, MX, US
To: MEXICO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cf33fb4d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009